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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [AU](#) [LY](#) [ZA](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS DERIDE AL-QADHAFI

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 384

[1](#)B. TRIPOLI 134

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Booth for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Senior Foreign Ministry representatives expressed skepticism about Libyan President Muammar al-Qadhafi's leadership ability, soundness of judgment, and mental health.

In a meeting with the DCM and Pol/Econ officers, Zambian Government (GRZ) officials derided the Libyan "King of Kings" for his Messiah complex and amour propre -- weaknesses which they suggested would limit the newly-appointed AU Chair's ability to tackle the continent's challenges. They also emphasized that al-Qadhafi did not have authority to invite Caribbean and South and Central American nations to join the "United Africa." Foreign Ministry Permanent Secretary Tens Kapoma and Zambian Permanent Representative to the UN Lazarous Kapambwe almost went so far as to describe al-Qadhafi as a counterproductive force within the AU.

[1](#)2. (C) Although the Foreign Ministry officials appeared to hold little affection for the Libyan leader, Zambian President Rupiah Banda made Tripoli one of his first visits after his 2008 election. The bilateral discussions on trade and investment culminated in a Libyan pledge of "eight tractors and some ploughs to boost (Zambian) food production." Presumably al-Qadhafi also discussed his interest in the AU Chairmanship during his meeting with Banda. Al-Qadhafi's dinar diplomacy, however, seems to not have had on impact on senior GRZ diplomats, whose unprompted statements conveyed concern that al-Qadhafi will abuse the AU position to feed his own egomaniacal appetite rather than Africa's indigents.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: In light of Libya's seat on the UN Security Council and possible UN General Assembly presidency, the Zambians clearly consider al-Qadhafi's prominence in public fora disproportionate to his ability and prerogative. Al-Qadhafi's rise to center stage appears to be particularly unwelcome now that his theatrical performance will have an actual impact on AU member countries. If nothing else, Kapoma's and Kapambwe's ridicule (and the tacit agreement of other foreign ministry officials who were present during the meeting) implied that many Zambians do not embrace al-Qadhafi as a pan-African leader and hinted at the possibility that they may not even consider him an African at all.

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

BOOTH